3/27/72

Dear Peal,

I am not very sharp this morning from a combination of factors, so be careful to consider whether I have expressed myself poorly and not thought clearly and, perhaps, over-react. On first reading of your 3/24 I thought I saw an inconsistency and an indication of some kind of espionage.

First you say Turner and Hinkle are not doing the book and then that the publishers now say that the book won't be out until the fall. Maybe not then. Unless the publisher has cancelled, there is an inconsistency between delay and non-appearance. Moreover, I believe they got a sizable advance, and I can't believe either is in a position to return it. Now I would conjecture that one of the possibilities is that the publisher is writing off the advance. Sums like the reported $20,000 they do not write off easily. Also, can there be any Irving/Hughes wipeoff on this?

I think I have heard of one Asanoff, which is close to your Asanof, but I am not familiar with his kind of writing. This description, however, is of an entirely different book. I agree with you in reading whitewash into this but I'd go farthur and say it almost guarantees a dud. This is exceptional which one considers the potential of just that part of the Kaplan-Vidal story that is known. Now adding all these things together, and assuming all are true, you get a combination unusual in commercial enterprize, esp. publishing, in which a) a large advance is written off, b) formula is changed to the guaranteed dull and essentially pointless, c) a new cost is introduced with a new writer, who lacks some of the promotional potential of the originals, and at least d) that a literary failure is close to assured with a book of this cost and this potential, for the new formula, whether or not it seels enough copies to pay its way, has almost no subsidiary possibilities, such as movies. One of the sums one can extract from this is an interest in killing the subject. It is but one. I have learned that except for crookedness and some kinds of sensationalism, publishers are lousy businessmen. They do kooky things and fail to do obvious and obviously-necessary things, and they often jeopardize books needlessly. So, if all the reasoning is correct, the conclusion need not be.

Vel.'s method on this, as best I can appraise it, strikes me as both correct and proper and essential to the interest of his client. But you realize that even so simple a thing as this runs up somebody's costs.

Your AP friend's article has not come to my attention. Did AP move it? If not, where did it appear? Have you a copy? What fascinates me is that it is he who told you of the plan of some unnamed woman to sue. You say this after mention of his unpleasantnesses from authorities after his piece appear, which can hint that these authorities told him. Now, unless you have been blabbing (and this is not sexist-the worst problems of this sort I cope with involve men only), how could anyone know this? I have discussed it with nobody, with the possible exception of Jerry. We discussed it here, when you were here. Perhaps it is in our correspondence. You have never told me that you followed my suggestions, to see if you have a basis for suit. If you did not, and if you did not discuss this with others, it would seem that the possibilities of anyone, authorities or other, knowing of this would have to be limited to official origin, by bugging or mail interception. Perhaps you mentioned this to Levine, as I suggested? (He has not yet replied to my inquiry, by the way, which makes me wonder about him.) Id you did discuss this with him and not with others, I'd be interest in knowing more about his practise and which publishers, if any, are among his clients. The leak from him and non-response to me have a kind of consistency.

If you have a deal with RD, it may well be that you can first publish elsewhere, but I would strongly recommend consultation with them. Unless they have changed, they prefer to do their own planting. Don't give them an escuse to kill the deal....I will check with a friend who will know if AP moved any K-V story, will know if it appearaned in any NYTimes except a Sunday edition, and will probably know if the LATimes used it. If it had appeared in Chicago, I think I'd know.

Your saying that Joel is talking out of Santa Fe locates him as of the time of talking, if not permanently. But why is he talking? And has he said anything? It so ms strange that he now would. One question I would raise is does it relate to his rationality as of now? Or, is he talking through his sister, which would not locate him and might, in fact, not be him talking at all?

There is much about this that does not really make sense to me. And you have never told me if you have an agent. On this you should. But if you do not, when you finish the NY piece, have two xtra copies. Let me, if you'd like, send one to my British agent (I still need on in the US, where the hangups on the subject and me are enormous) and one to a friend who arranges for movies to be made. It should contain enough for either, but if you think not, with that as a beginning, a few notes might overcome of the deficiencies you may see for them.

Best regards,

Dear Js,

If you are friends with Bill Turner, this may confront you with a conflict. This woman is the origin of the Kaplan-Vidal story, did most of the work on it, much as a stringer for Ramparts, not the individuals there. When Hinkle left he too her stuff with him and appears to have made a deal for a book jointly with Turner, wit out asking or consulting her. She was working on it when she learned they have the book contracted. When she was here she had heard of what is not typical of Turner but is entirely inconsistent (except when he is currying favor or exploiting, as with Garrison), great kindness to her in the ms., and that for some reason of reason, he and Hinkle had become quite disillusioned with or disgusted with the book and/or the subject. although they began with hopes it would make a movie, as I think it should. I have a short fuse on the really extensive plagiarism that has become so common, even when it does not involve my work. This woman is having a rough time of it, having had to almost give up her professional work to care for two teen-age kids when abandoned by an alcoholic hisband, so I resent it even more for her. I know Garrison wholesaled her stuff around, and when she came here I gave her copies of her private letters that he had and was distributing to everyone who would take them. She was shall I say surprised? As I remember it, I had some of her stuff that had been withheld from her and gave her the first copies she had of that. Unless she did talk, it is incredible that the Mexican gov't would know of the possibility of suit, which I suggested to her when she was here. I think that is anyone to whom she did not see her stuff uses it, she has not lost her rights to it. Of course, one of the interests I have is did AP move this K-V story? She doesn't say, but the writers is with AP down there, I guess. Could be in US, poss. Sante Fe. I can't imagine a Sunday news piece paying the cost of going to and from Sante Fe on prospects. And, anything else you may know that does not involve a breach of confidence that can possibly help her. Now that the wuestion is raised, I think you should know that I can give you almost all the uncredited sources of Power on the Right, and that his Ramparts piece was 75% repetition of my stuff, and that when asked not only about this but about failure even to mention my work when he stole it so heavily, Bill's response as reported to me was a shrug and the statement, "So far as I am concerned, once Hal prints anything it becomes public domain." He more than anyone else was responsible for the Bradley fiasco, and from Power on the Right, he had to have known in advance that at the very best his sources were both undependable and Bradley's blood enemies. They were then in court, at each other's throats. Bad as the Vradley thing was, it is nothing to what it almost grew into right before the Shaw trial, when what JG planned would have been our greatest disaster. I was present at one of the things, and when I'm out there agin, it will stand you hair straight up to hear some of it. H